



June 2010



The Marlboro Soil and Water Conservation District Newsletter

Volume 10, Issue 2

Vice Chairman T. A. O'Neal Remembering How It Was

While attending a Soil Conservation State Meeting one of the speakers gave the history of the service passed into law April 27, 1935. The dust storms of the preceding three years in Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas and other southwestern states made this passage possible. I began to remember what farming was like when I was ten. As a ten year old boy this wouldn't have ranked high on my Richter scale but now I began to stir memories of farming in that year. A great portion of the land in Marlboro County was planted in cotton, corn, oats and hay. Most of the horsepower came from mules; single or double plow occasionally four mules pulling a manure spreader. Corn was the first crop planted in March with two mules pulling a middle buster that made the furrow rows four and half feet apart then the planter planted in about three weeks. After corn was two to three inches tall a single Dixie plow was used to bar off and throw the dirt to cover the grass in the middle of the row and sometime putting fresh soil to make corn grow, no fertilizer. Later a sweep stock was used to push more soil to make corn grow and keep middle clean. The final plowing took place in the middle of June. The corn that was planted in ten inch furrows is now level so the Dixie turn plow throws dirt to the corn while someone walks and drops peas two feet apart and another Dixie plow covers the peas and throw these furrow to the corn. Then the sweep runs in the middle to remove balk. The corn was four to five feet tall and everybody was relieved that the mule and everybody had survived the heat. The peas were picked, by using crop rotation the soil was improved; ready for cotton next year. Cotton stalks were cut by a cutter pulled by a pair of mules. The

wing was removed from the Dixie turning plow and two passes with the point uprooted the stalks. Then with the wing back on the Dixie, it threw dirt over the old row and a sweep plowed out the balk. Five hundred to one thousand pounds of 8-4-4 or 8-3-3 fertilizer was put in the furrow. The winged Dixie covered it and made the seedbed which makes the soil ready for the planter, to be pulled by a single mule finishing the planting process. Remember every inch of earth surface had to be plowed or hoed because crab grass emerged 3 times. After cotton emerged, hopefully in two weeks, plowing began, first plow both sides of cotton, split the middle then plowing one side and splitting every other middle each week until middle of July. The middle of July was lay by time. Some of the mules went to summer pasture land on Gardner' Bluff at the Pee Dee River until late October. Other mules were kept and fed for pulling wagons. Oats were planted in bottom land by scattering seed and followed by a two horse turn plow in October and November. In 1940 more tractors appeared on each farm; first for planting grain and hay. The disc harrow became the main tool in soil preparation, how we loved them, made everything look good. With the coming of the disc harrow the dust bowl of the southwest of 1934-1935 that blew dust to Washington DC became real to us in Marlboro County. Disk harrows broke the soil into particles making the dust a real bad thing. Soil compaction was made by heavy implements and tractor tires. Soil Conservation Service brought the idea to plant trees in rows to prevent soil erosion. Rows of pine trees were planted to slow the movement of soil



T. A. "Mr. Tommy" remembering.....

and dust with only partial success. In the 1970's a few no till planters were sold to farmers. Now they are used extensively. In July 2009 I was pulling scattered weeds in cotton four feet tall. I looked down and could not see the soil because the residue of wheat stalks and soybean litter of the 2008 crop was making a mat to walk on. To me that is real progress and hope for the future. Now we need help fighting resistant pigweeds.

The reason for mentioning the many trips for planting and cultivating cotton and corn is the fact we had plenty of time. In 1935 little thought was given to labor saving devices because everybody had to live and everyone was needed to fight crabgrass and hand pick cotton. Cotton was the only crop that brought in money. No herbicide was available until 1958 (circa) to prevent grass from emerging or to kill it after emergencies, which now makes no till or strip till possible. On its seventy-fifth birthday, the Soil Conservation Service deserves to be recognized for helping in protecting our environment, soil, water and our future. We don't know how long the earth will be in existence but I feel the soil will be needed.

In the early 19th century William Cullen Bryant wrote- "All that tread, the globe are but a handful to the tribes, that slumber in its bosom. "



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Signup Continuing

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides financial and technical assistance to help South Carolina landowners address natural resource concerns, promote environmental quality, and protect wildlife habitat on property they own or control. The cost-share funds are available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) which is administered by NRCS.

EQIP helps farmers improve production while protecting environmental quality by addressing such concerns as soil erosion and productivity, grazing management, water quality, animal waste, and forestry concerns. EQIP also assists eligible small-scale farmers who have historically not participated in or ranked high enough to be funded in previous program sign ups.

This is a continuous sign up EQIP; however, to increase your chances of funding, apply by September 30. Funding selections will be announced in the second quarter of 2011. Producers interested in applying should visit our office as soon as possible to discuss your natural resource needs and how EQIP may be able to help.

Please visit NRCS' web site at www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov or call (843)479-4552 ext 3 for more information.



SAVE THE DATE
SEPTEMBER 16, 2010

The Marlboro District will host the
Pee Dee Area Fall Meeting
on September 16, 2010
at Moree's Sportsman Lodge
on the scenic Pee Dee River.
More details will follow.

Affililliate Membership Drive

Marlboro Soil and Water Conservation
District

210 Throop Street

Bennettsville, SC 29512

We look forward to working with you to
make Marlboro County a better place to
live.

Please circle membership level—

- *Regular Membership - \$20-25 donation*
- *Silver Membership - \$26-50 donation*
- *Gold Membership - \$51-75 donation*

- *Newsletter Sponsor - \$100*
(Please include business
card or logo)

- *Our newsletter reaches*
250+

THANK YOU IN
ADVANCE FOR YOUR
SUPPORT!

Name: _____

Address: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

All programs and services of the Marlboro Soil and Water Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, age, gender, national origin, religion, handicap or marital status.

Current Members

REGULAR MEMBERSHIP

Johnathan Mack Helms Farms
James C. Collins
Pat and Blake Rogers Farms
Bill & Gloria Bethea Farms

SILVER MEMBERSHIP

Burns' Farms Inc.

GOLD MEMBERSHIP

Z. V. Pate, Inc.
Richard & Jane Rogers Farms
Gill House Restaurant, Laurinburg, NC

FRIENDS OF CONSERVATION

Wade R. Crow, Attorney
ArborOne Financial
Carolina Bank
Marlboro County Farm Bureau
Marlboro Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Meggs Ford, Inc.
Moree's Sportsman's Preserve, LLC
Southeast Farm Equipment

Commissioners:

Richard Rogers, Chairman
T. A. O'Neal, Vice-Chair
E. Michael O'Tuel, Treasurer
Francis M. Hinson, Secretary
Billy Covington, Commissioner
J. P. Hodges, Commissioner Emeritus

Associate Commissioners

Beverly O'Neal
Pat Rogers

District Staff

Dorothy B. Branyon, Admin. Assist.

SCDNR

Vacant, Program Coordinator

USDA - NRCS Staff:

Frank Stephens, Supervisory
District Conservationist
Daniel Griffin, Soil Conservationist
Danny Driggers, Soil
Conservation Technician



The Marlboro Soil and Water
Conservation District Board
Scheduled meeting is the third
Tuesday of month at 7:00 pm in the
USDA Service Center
Conference Room, at
210 Throop Street,
Bennettsville, SC . 29512
For more information call
843-479-4552, Ext. 3
Meetings are open to
the public.

The Marlboro Conservation
District would like to challenge
all our agricultural related
agencies, landowners, school
administrators, teachers and
affiliate members to make this
another year for improving and
conserving our natural re-
sources. Thanks to all for
promoting conservation.

**Marlboro Soil and Water
Conservation District**

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We care about conservation-Online at:
www.dnr.sc.gov/conservation